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Procedure for evaluation of DCF Work Plans (STECF-16-16)

Edited by Christoph Stransky & Hendrik Doerner

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Contact information

Name: STECF secretariat

Address: Unit D.02 Water and Marine Resources, Via Enrico Fermi 2749, 21027 Ispra VA, Italy

E-mail: stecf-secretariat@jrc.ec.europa.eu

Tel.: +39 0332 789343

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Abstract

Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, C(2016) 1084, OJ C 74, 26.2.2016, p. 4–10. The Commission may consult the group on any matter relating to marine and fisheries biology, fishing gear technology, fisheries economics, fisheries governance, ecosystem effects of fisheries, aquaculture or similar disciplines. This report deals with the procedure to evaluate the DCF national work plans.

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SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF)

Procedure for evaluation of DCF Work Plans (STECF-16-16)

THIS REPORT WAS ISSUED DURING THE PLENARY MEETING HELD IN BRUSSELS, 24-28 OCTOBER 2016

Background

Based on Article 6 of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008, STECF is responsible for evaluating the National Programmes of Member States, in terms of conformity to content set by this Regulation, scientific relevance of the data to be covered and quality of proposed methods and procedures. The National Programmes will be replaced by the Work Plans. According to the DCF recast proposal, STECF will be requested to evaluate the Work Plans of Member States, based on the same criteria, as before: conformity with EU multi annual programme, scientific relevance and quality. This year, Member States will submit their Work Plans for the first time (31st of October 2016) and STECF EWG 16-16 will be requested to evaluate them. The Commission shall adopt these work plans by the end of 2016. The tight deadlines imposed on all involved parties (MSs, STECF and Commission), make it essential to streamline the process as much as possible. On the STECF side, there is a need for clear guidance on the evaluation of the Work Plans, to help EWG deliver concrete assessment to the Commission, in order to meet the tight deadlines.

The process for the evaluation of the Work Plans was discussed in STECF Plenary 16-02 (point 5.13) and a timeline for the evaluation procedure was proposed. According to this timeline, the evaluation criteria and form should be prepared and discussed at the relevant meetings on data collection taking place between August and October (Regional Coordination Meetings, Liaison Meeting). A number of ad hoc contracts are foreseen to compile all input received and draft evaluation guidelines and templates for the WP evaluation. The output of these ad hoc contracts will be discussed at the STECF plenary.

Request to the STECF

The STECF is requested to:

1. Revise the evaluation criteria and evaluation form for the DCF Work Plans, in line with the requirements as set in the EU MAP and Work Plan template. In case of disagreement with the proposed criteria, suggest alternative solutions.
2. STECF is requested to conclude its work on this topic during the plenary. The guidelines will be made available to pre-screeners in the week after the plenary, in preparation for the EWG-16-16 (7-11 November 2016).

STECF observations and conclusions

Based on a summary document provided by the Commission, the evaluation of Work Plans (WP) should follow a two-stage approach.

The first step will be a WP pre-screening process taking place before the STECF EWG 16-16, from 31 October to 7 November 2016, dealing with the technical evaluation of the WPs based on the ad-hoc expert reports on WP evaluation criteria.

The process to implement the first step is:

- Definition of a set of questions from the ad-hoc contracts
- selection of pre-screeners according to expertise/region
- pre-screening exercise to be concluded by the 7 November: technical evaluation on the basis of the questions identified under point 1.

Even if this process is rather clear, there are several issues that could affect the expected results:

- Timing: Pre-screeners have to study in detail the legislative framework (EU MAP and WP template), the scientific best practices (ICES EGs, GFCM-DCRF, methodologies from PGECON, etc.) and be aware of Regional Co-ordination Meeting and Liaison Meeting recommendations. This will require considerable time.
- The set of questions for evaluations has to be prepared before the start of the pre-screening on the basis of the ad-hoc contracts.
- Answers to be provided by pre-screeners to the evaluation questions should be standardised as far as possible, using categories similar to those being used for the evaluation of DCF Annual Reports (yes, no, mostly, partly, etc.).
- MS legally have to submit the WP by the end of October (EMFF Regulation 508/2014, Art. 21.1), but some delays might occur.
- If errors or gaps are detected in WPs, there will be no time for giving feedbacks and correct issues before the WG

The second step will be the overall evaluation of the WPs by the STECF EWG 16-16 (7-11 November 2016), based on general principles and specific checkpoints.

The process to address this second step needs to be better defined in the Terms of Reference for the EWG 16-16. Checkpoints suggested by DG MARE are generally appropriate but some of them appear to be very ambitious (e.g. regional specificities and needs, improvement in terms of coverage and quality), or they relate to coverage, quality issues, fulfilment of end-user needs, etc., which cannot be quantified at the moment or are subject to future regional co-ordination (Regional WPs). The EWG will make every effort to finalise the first step (technical evaluation), but the second step (overall evaluation) should be limited to highlight the most important issues that would justify requesting a revision of a national WP.

STECF notes that the title of the EWG implies the evaluation of regional WPs, but these do not exist yet in 2016, so such evaluation will not be performed this year.

Ultimately, STECF is of the opinion that to undertake a comprehensive review of the evaluation criteria and evaluation form for DCF WPs at the present time would be premature and in any case, the resources required to do so are not available during the STECF Plenary Meeting. The evaluation of WPs has to go through the first round (i.e. the 2 stages and follow-up by the Commission and Member States) before any concrete changes in the proposed procedures can be suggested. The current WP templates and guidelines leave moderate room for interpretation which will result in various MS approaches to deal with the same issue. This diversity of interpretations will have to be discussed by the relevant parties.

In principle, the aim of this year's evaluation is to inform DG MARE whether the WPs are specified sufficiently well so that the EU MAP requirements can be fulfilled in subsequent years. However, STECF notes that the time-scale to complete the process in 2016 is extremely challenging and given the complexity of the WPs and evaluation templates, there is a risk that the process will not be completed to the desired timescale.

Contact details of STECF members and meeting participants

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Name	Address ¹	Tel.	Email
STECF members			
Abella, J. Alvaro	Independent consultant	Tel. 0039-3384989821	aabellafisheries@gmail.com
Andersen, Jesper Levring	Department of Food and Resource Economics (IFRO) Section for Environment and Natural Resources University of Copenhagen Rolighedsvej 25 1958 Frederiksberg Denmark	Tel.dir.: +45 35 33 68 92	jla@ifro.ku.dk
Arrizabalaga, Haritz	AZTI / Unidad de Investigación Marina, Herrera kaia portualdea z/g 20110 Pasaia (Gipuzkoa), Spain	Tel.: +34667174477	harri@azti.es
Bailey, Nicholas	Marine Scotland Science, Marine Laboratory, P.O Box 101 375 Victoria Road, Torry Aberdeen AB11 9DB UK	Tel: +44 (0)1224 876544 Direct: +44 (0)1224 295398 Fax: +44 (0)1224 295511	baileyn@marlab.ac.uk n.bailey@marlab.ac.uk
Bertignac, Michel	Laboratoire de Biologie Halieutique IFREMER Centre de Brest BP 70 - 29280 Plouzane, France	tel : +33 (0)2 98 22 45 25 - fax : +33 (0)2 98 22 46 53	michel.bertignac@ifremer.fr
Borges, Lisa	FishFix, Brussels, Belgium		info@fishfix.eu
Cardinale, Massimiliano (vice-chair)	Föreningsgatan 45, 330 Lysekil, Sweden	Tel: +46 523 18750	massimiliano.cardinale@slu.se

Name	Address ¹	Tel.	Email
STECF members			
Catchpole, Thomas	CEFAS Lowestoft Laboratory, Pakefield Road, Lowestoft Suffolk, UK NR33 0HT		thomas.catchpole@cefas.co.uk
Curtis, Hazel	Sea Fish Industry Authority 18 Logie Mill Logie Green Road Edinburgh EH7 4HS, U.K.	Tel: +44 (0)131 524 8664 Fax: +44 (0)131 558 1442	Hazel.curtis@seafish.co.uk
Daskalov, Georgi	Laboratory of Marine Ecology, Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences	Tel.: +359 52 646892	Georgi.daskalov@gmail.com
Döring, Ralf (vice-chair)	Thünen Bundesforschungsinstitut, für Ländliche Räume, Wald und Fischerei, Institut für Seefischerei - AG Fischereiökonomie, Palmaille 9, D-22767 Hamburg, Germany	Tel.: 040 38905-185 Fax.: 040 38905-263	ralf.doering@thuenen.de
Gascuel, Didier	AGROCAMPUS OUEST 65 Route de Saint Briec, CS 84215, F-35042 RENNES Cedex France	Tel: +33(0)2.23.48.55.34 Fax: +33(0)2.23.48.55.35	Didier.Gascuel@agrocampus-ouest.fr
Knittweis, Leyla	Department of Biology University of Malta Msida, MSD 2080 Malta		Leyla.knittweis@um.edu.mt
Malvarosa, Loretta	NISEA S.c.a.r.l.		malvarosa@nisea.eu
Martin, Paloma	CSIC Instituto de Ciencias del Mar Passeig Marítim, 37-49 08003 Barcelona Spain	Tel: 4.93.2309500 Fax: 34.93.2309555	paloma@icm.csic.es






















Name	Address ¹	Tel.	Email
STECF members			
Motova, Arina	Sea Fish Industry Authority 18 Logie Mill Logie Green Road Edinburgh EH7 4HS, U.K	Tel.: +44 131 524 8662	arina.motova@seafish.co.uk
Murua, Hilario	AZTI / Unidad de Investigación Marina, Herrera kaia portualdea z/g 20110 Pasaia (Gipuzkoa), Spain	Tel: 0034 667174433 Fax: 94 6572555	hmurua@azti.es
Nord, Jenny	The Swedish Agency of Marine and Water Management (SwAM)	Tel. 0046 76 140 140 3	Jenny.nord@havochvatten.se
Pastoors, Martin	Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association, Louis Braillelaan 80, 2719 EK Zoetermeer, The Netherlands		mpastoors@pelagicfish.eu
Paulrud, Anton	Swedish Agency of Marine and Water Management	Tel.: +46 106986292	Anton.paulrud@hochvatten.se
Prellezo, Raúl	AZTI -Unidad de Investigación Marina Txatxarramendi Ugarte a z/g 48395 Sukarrieta (Bizkaia), Spain	Tel: +34 667174368	rprellezo@azti.es
Raid, Tiit	Estonian Marine Institute, University of Tartu, Mäealuse 14, Tallin, EE-126, Estonia	Tel.: +372 58339340 Fax: +372 6718900	Tiit.raid@gmail.com
Sabatella, Evelina Carmen	NISEA, Via Irno, 11, 84135 Salerno, Italy	TEL.: +39 089795775	e.sabatella@nisea.eu
Sala, Antonello	Italian National Research Council (CNR) Institute of Marine Sciences (ISMAR), Largo Fiera della Pesca, 1 60125 Ancona – Italy	Tel: +39 071 2078841 Fax: +39 071 55313 Mob.: +39 3283070446	a.sala@ismar.cnr.it

Name	Address ¹	Tel.	Email
STECF members			
Scarcella, Giuseppe	1) Italian National Research Council (CNR), Institute of Marine Sciences (ISMAR) - Fisheries Section, Largo Fiera della Pesca, 1, 60125 Ancona - Italy 2) AP Marine Environmental Consultancy Ltd, 2, ACROPOLEOS ST. AGLANJIA, P.O.BOX 26728 1647 Nicosia, Cyprus	Tel: +39 071 2078846 Fax: +39 071 55313 Tel.: +357 99664694	g.scarcella@ismar.cnr.it gscarcella@apmarine.com.cy
Soldo, Alen	Department of Marine Studies, University of Split, Livanjska 5, 21000 Split, Croatia	Tel.: +385914433906	soldo@unist.hr
Somarakis, Stylianos	Institute of Marine Biological Resources and Inland Waters (IMBRIW), Hellenic Centre of Marine Research (HCMR), Thalassocosmos Gournes, P.O. Box 2214, Heraklion 71003, Crete, Greece	Tel.: +30 2810 337832 Fax +30 6936566764	somarak@hcmr.gr
Stransky, Christoph	Thünen Institute [TI-SF] Federal Research Institute for Rural Areas, Forestry and Fisheries, Institute of Sea Fisheries, Palmallee 9, D-22767 Hamburg, Germany	Tel. +49 40 38905-228 Fax: +49 40 38905-263	christoph.stransky@thuenen.de
Ulrich, Clara (chair)	Technical University of Denmark, National Institute of Aquatic Resources, (DTU Aqua), Charlottenlund Slot, JægersborgAllé 1, 2920 Charlottenlund, Denmark		clu@aqu.dtu.dk
van Hoof, Luc	IMARES, Haringkade 1, IJmuiden, The Netherlands	Tel.: +31 61061991	Luc.vanhoof@wur.nl
Vanhee, Willy	Independent consultant		wvanhee@telenet.be
Vrgoc, Nedo	Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Split, Setaliste Ivana Mestrovica 63, 21000 Split, Croatia	Tel.: +385 21408002	vrgoc@izor.hr

Name	Address	Telephone no.	<u>Email</u>
Doerner, Hendrik	DG JRC, STECF secretariat	Tel.: +39 0332789343	stecf- secretariat@jrc.ec.europa .eu
Kostopoulou, Venetia	DG MARE, C3		Venetia.KOSTOPOULOU@ ec.europa.eu

List of Background Documents

The following background documents

-  Evaluation criteria for EWG 16-16 final
-  Table 4 5A Evaluation Guidelines
-  Table 1A 1B 1C Evaluation Guidelines
-  Table 1A Annex 3 - Filling_Table_1A
-  Table 1A Annex R scrip and reference tables
-  Table 1D 1F Evaluation Guidelines Part 1
-  Table 1D 1F Evaluation Guidelines Part 2
-  Table 1D Annex WGRFS 2012 report
-  Table 1D Annex WGRFS Report 2013
-  Table 1D Annex WKSMRF 2009
-  Table 1E Annex NASCO Rivers List EU
-  Table 1E Annex WGEEL EMU List EU
-  Table 1E Evaluation Guidelines
-  Table 1F Annex wkbyc_2013
-  Table 1G 1H Evaluation Guidelines
-  Table 1G Annex ICES Survey Protocol Guidelines
-  Table 2A 3 5B Evaluation Guidelines Part 1
-  Table 2A 3 5B Evaluation Guidelines Part 2
-  Table 6A 7A 7B 7C Annex EWG 16-08 Evaluation AR
-  Table 6A 7A 7B 7C Annex List of Recommendation accepted for draft LM-13_Report
-  Table 6A 7A 7B 7C Evaluation Guidelines

are published on the EWG-16-16 meeting's web site on:
<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1616>

Authors:

STECF members:

Ulrich, C., Abella, J. A., Andersen, J., Arrizabalaga, H., Bailey, N., Bertignac, M., Borges, L., Cardinale, M., Catchpole, T., Curtis, H., Daskalov, G., Döring, R., Gascuel, D., Knittweis, L., Malvarosa, L., Martin, P., Motova, A., Murua, H., Nord, J., Pastoors, M., Paulrud, A., Prellezo, R., Raid, T., Sabatella, E., Sala, A., Scarcella, G., Soldo, A., Somarakis, S., Stransky, C., van Hoof, L., Vanhee, W., Vrgoc, Nedo.

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The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) has been established by the European Commission. The STECF is being consulted at regular intervals on matters pertaining to the conservation and management of living aquatic resources, including biological, economic, environmental, social and technical considerations.

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